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# GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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## *THE KASHMIR QUESTION*

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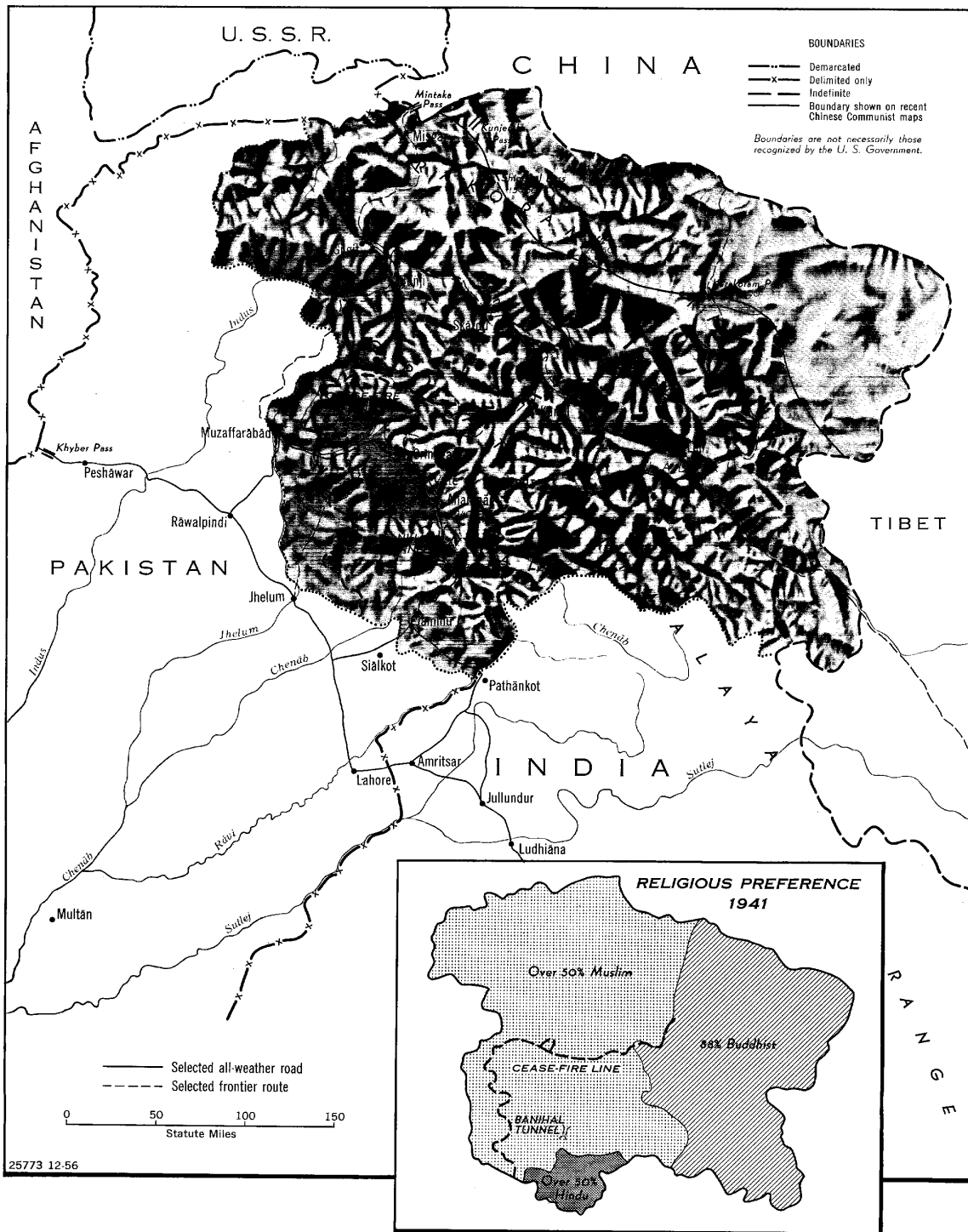
The Pakistan Government, alarmed at recent developments in Indian-occupied Kashmir, plans to bring the Kashmir question before the Security Council of the United Nations. The Kashmir area has been relatively quiet since the cease-fire was agreed upon in 1950. Nevertheless, significant changes, with cumulative effects, have been taking place, particularly in the Indian-occupied section; and new facets of the Kashmir problem are developing. Most disturbing to Pakistan is the recent action of the Kashmir Constituent Assembly in adopting a clause stating that Kashmir "is and shall be an integral part of India." Reports of dealings between Chou En-lai of China and Suhrawardy of Pakistan and between Nehru and Bulganin figure in the current maneuvers for Kashmir. Even India's initial reaction to the situation in Hungary was reportedly affected by the fear that precedents created there by UN action might have repercussions in Kashmir.

The partition of India in 1947 left Jammu and Kashmir, commonly referred to as Kashmir, as a prize that was claimed by both India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, the boundaries of India and Pakistan cut across physical and cultural features in such a manner that the allocation of Kashmir to either country would create problems for the possessor.

The Great Himalaya mountain range extends northwest-southeast through Kashmir and divides the area into a relatively humid, fertile, and populous southwestern quarter and a drier, colder area of high mountains and plateaus to the northeast. Most of the people, approximately 80 to 90 percent, live southwest of the Great Himalaya. This area is crossed by another mountain range, the Pir Panjal, that divides it into two major populous regions: (1) the interior valley, called the Vale of Kashmir; and (2) the southwestern fringe, called Jammu, which lies between the Pir Panjal Range and the neighboring plains of Pakistan. After fighting ended in Kashmir, India remained in possession of the entire Vale of Kashmir and more than half of the fertile Jammu area.

The all-weather roads from Jammu and the Vale, however, all led to Pakistan, as also do the rivers. India quickly constructed a new all-weather road into Jammu, via Pathankot. The Vale of Kashmir, however, could still be reached by road during only 8 months of the year, since the route across the Pir Panjal became impassable in winter. Plans were made for an all-weather road with a tunnel cutting through the mountain range at an elevation of 7,250 feet. On 9 September 1956, the Pir Panjal Range was pierced below Banihal Pass by a tunnel, constructed by West German contractors. By early 1957, the tunnel, although lacking final touches, is expected to accommodate some winter traffic, and a second tunnel is to be started alongside it. The entire project should be completed by the end of 1958, thus providing two tubes 16 1/2 feet wide, 18 feet high, and 8,320 feet long, each fitted with modern equipment for lighting and ventilation. These Banihal tunnels will make possible the year-round movement by land of Indian military forces into the Vale of Kashmir. They will also permit commercial traffic to move between India and the Vale the year round, thus ending the previous skyrocketing of prices in the Vale during the 4-month winter period. The completion of the tunnels will remove the major physical obstacle to the integration of Indian-occupied Kashmir with India.

Pakistan now occupies the northwestern part of Kashmir, which includes almost half of the total area but less than one-third of the people. Pakistan fears that the integration of Indian-occupied Kashmir with India, if not stopped by the UN, will result in eventual acceptance of the cease-fire line as a permanent international boundary. Another important aspect of the problem is the water supply of West Pakistan. All of the five large rivers of West Pakistan either rise in or flow through India or Indian-occupied Kashmir before reaching Pakistan. If flow of the rivers were significantly reduced, much of the agricultural land in West Pakistan would become desert. However, even if all of Kashmir were given to Pakistan, only one river -- the Jhelum -- would be entirely within Pakistan territory. Parts of three rivers would still lie within India, and the fourth -- the Indus -- would still have its headwaters in Tibet. The problem of preventing possible diversion of water from these rivers cannot be solved by any settlement of the Kashmir question alone.



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To the Islamic Republic of Pakistan the religious status of the people of Kashmir is paramount, whereas India considers that the question of religion is less significant than the economic and political environment provided for the people of Kashmir. Only a small part of Indian-occupied Kashmir is predominantly Hindu in religion; much of the remainder is predominantly Muslim, and a large area of Ladakh in the east is predominantly Buddhist (Lamaist). India hopes that its land-reform program in Ladakh and closer economic links with the Vale resulting from improved transportation will convince the people in these areas that union with India is the best solution for them. Observers in Kashmir still report, however, that the Muslims are consistently suspicious and resentful of actions by the Indian Government.

Communist China also claims a part of Kashmir. For several years, Chinese soldiers reportedly have patrolled major mountain passes, Shimshal and Kunjerab, in northern Kashmir, preventing entry into a desolate uninhabited area north of the Karakoram that formerly was claimed by both British India and China. In this area, boundary negotiations between China and Pakistan or India (or both) will eventually be necessary to settle the question of the undemarcated international boundary. Intelligence reports from New Delhi throw an interesting sidelight on the role of China in the Kashmir question. According to rumors, discussions between Suhrawardy of Pakistan and Chou En-lai of Communist China involve the offer of Buddhist Ladakh to China in exchange for Communist Chinese support of Pakistan's claims to the rest of Kashmir. Information regarding these discussions reportedly was delivered to Nehru by the Soviet Ambassador to India at the time he delivered the Bulganin letter on 8 November 1956.

The dynamics of the Kashmir problem are such that India apparently intends to maintain the status quo and avoid a plebiscite, whereas Pakistan hopes to force a plebiscite that it believes might throw all or most of Kashmir to Pakistan. Even under pressure from the UN, India is not expected to agree to a plebiscite on terms acceptable to Pakistan; therefore, a plebiscite is not likely unless UN forces have to move into Kashmir in case of international conflict.

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